

Media, PA – At a presentation of federal grant funding to continue Delaware County's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) emphasized the government's responsibility to not let up in its efforts to root out these horrible online offenses and expressed his support of increased resources for the national program that enhances investigations and prosecutions of crimes against children facilitated through the Internet. The U.S. Attorney's Office presented \$649,117 to Delaware County to continue to improve its task force that has fought heinous acts of child pornography and has taken seriously the part of the task forces' mission to work with other agencies. Its actions have led to investigations across the country, including in California and Oklahoma. With the Department of Justice announcement last year that 13 new state and local law enforcement agencies would receive funds, ICAC task forces now exist in every state.

— "The ability of a number of agencies to work together across the federal, State, and local levels is critical in the effort to eradicate the despicable and disgusting crimes being committed through the sexual exploitation of children online," said Congressman Sestak. "I am pleased that Delaware County will continue to be able to effectively operate its task force through this grant and, at the same time, we must always look to expand our efforts through actions such as the passage into law of a bill I strongly supported to strengthen prosecution for the possession and distribution of child pornography."

The Effective Child Pornography Prosecution Act closed a legal loophole that allowed a man found guilty of knowingly receiving and knowingly possession child pornography to escape punishment. In addition, the legislation changed the U.S. Federal Code to improve the efficiency in the prosecution of child pornography cases by including money laundering as a prosecution tool and make it easier to prosecute those who knowingly and repeatedly view child pornography.

At the ceremony held at the Delaware County Courthouse, Congressman Sestak thanked Laurie Magid, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and District Attorney G. Mike Green for their support of this program, and gave special recognition to Lt. David C. Peifer, who heads the Task Force. In addition to meeting with the Congressman to discuss the project, Peifer participated as a panelist in the first Seventh Congressional District Anti-Violence Summit, providing a unique and important perspective on crime. The Congressman applauded the work of Peifer, whose team opened 679 cases in the first half of 2008.

"Lt. Peifer's organization deserves particular credit for recruiting 22 counties and 25 police department into a Pennsylvania Cooperative Network to expand the reach of his task force, and for recognizing the importance of educating his personnel on this issue, sending more than 400 officers, prosecutors and probation officers to various Internet training schools," said Congressman Sestak. "There is still much work to be done, though, as U.S. Customs Services estimate that 100,000 websites offer illegal child pornography. In addition, more than 20,000 images are posted online every week according to the National Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Children.

"Placing any regulations on the Internet is extraordinarily challenging and in most situations unwarranted; however, in this case we cannot accept that even one of these horrifying images exists. I will offer any support I can to this program as it continues to build government, community and private partnerships."

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.

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